

**TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MEETING
MAY 5, 1998**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.. Present were Mayor Venis, Vice-Mayor Cox, and Councilmembers Bush, Paul, and Weiner. Also present were Town Administrator Flatley, Town Attorney Webber, Fire Chief Michael Donati and Town Clerk Reinfeld recording the meeting.

Mr. Flatley stated that during the meeting, a series of scenarios would be reviewed and by the end of the meeting, he hoped some kind of consensus and understanding would be reached. He stated that Council could not take any action tonight, but hopefully an agreement could be confirmed tomorrow night at the regular Council meeting.

1. Emergency Medical Services in the Town of Davie

Mr. Flatley provided a history of the Town's EMS services and in 1996, Council decided to pursue the Town providing EMS services which resulted in the Town contracting with American Medical Response (AMR). He stated that the contract provided for the Town to assume responsibility for providing EMS services when the Town's Fire Department was ready. Mr. Flatley indicated that in 1997, Council's goal was to hire only cross-trained certified paramedics/firefighters when positions became vacant and for the Town's current firefighters to become cross-trained. He mentioned that the Town currently had 21 cross-trained personnel with 3 attending school for training. Mr. Flatley said that in 1998, it was Council's goal to continue AMR's contract and to build the fourth fire station at Nob Hill.

Mr. Flatley provided the following scenarios: 1) the Town's current system; 2) taking over EMS services at one station; 3) taking over EMS services at the new station being built at Nob Hill; 4) taking over EMS services at the remaining two stations; 5) purchasing a dual purpose engines; and 6) providing manning of two paramedics versus three paramedics.

A presentation was made on each scenario by Deputy Fire Chief Len DePaola with discussion following (presentation documents attached).

Vice-Mayor Cox questioned the increase to businesses with Deputy Chief DePaola responding that the figure would increase by 130%. Councilmember Paul stated that it was her impression that the increase being mentioned was the highest price for fire suppression and personnel and possibly the lowest in transport revenue. She indicated that she had conducted a study and the revenue generated had an average of 70 to 75% collection rate.

Councilmember Weiner questioned if the Town had conducted a systematic check on the calls and transports. He indicated that he would like to see what the actual collections had been.

Michael Futterman, representing the Town's auditor - Rachlin Cohen and Holtz, advised that his firm had reviewed AMR's system and documents. He indicated that from March to July [1997], there were a significant number of calls made to people with no insurance which decreased the collection rate which resulted in an approximate 38% collection rate; however, if the calls for people without insurance were backed up, the collection rate would increase to 63%.

Jose Rivero, EMS Coordinator, explained the transport revenues and explained the use of backup units.

Mr. Flatley recommended that the Town should utilize Broward County's dispatch records for response times. He stated that the Town should meet with AMR regarding the response time to decide what type of response the Town was looking for. Mr. Flatley

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
MAY 5, 1998

advised Council that it should be aware of the overtime issue as this was a great concern. He concluded by discussing a joint powers agreement which would be presented to the Broward County Commission.

Chief Donati stated that at the time the Town took over Station 65, AMR's contract would be near its expiration when AMR contract expired, the Town would need to have sufficient manpower to absorb the additional fire stations.

Councilmember Weiner stated that he thought the joint powers agreement was worthy of consideration and was disturbed that the Town staff had not met with the County on this issue.

Scott McCloskey, 2102 Nova Village Drive, stated that to his knowledge, the collection rate of 39% was one of the lowest collection rates within the County.

Frank Buchart, representing Broward County Fire and Rescue, indicated that the County would be interested in working in a joint venture with the Town.

Michael Davenport discussed the financial, quality, and control aspects of AMR providing the service.

Al Tyler, 8090 SW 19 Court, stated he did not agree with Mr. Davenport and he was in favor of competitive bidding. He added that the Town's Fire Department should have the opportunity to provide the EMS services.

John Deegan, 520 Sumter Avenue, stated that a municipality had the ability to provide the best service for its citizens and it was the most direct and deliberate way to deliver service. He indicated that the firefighters deserved the chance to provide EMS services and even though it may cost \$60 per home, the service provided by the Town's Fire Department would be the best.

Katherine Wall, 15221 East Waterford Drive, stated that money was an important issue but unfortunately that had become the issue instead of a life/safety issue. She stated that she would rather pay the additional money in order to have a better service.

John Pisula, Vice Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, stated that it was not financially feasible for the Town to provide the EMS service at this time. He indicated that he was concerned with the cost for EMS increasing from less than \$40 to more than \$87. Mr. Pisula added that Council must take into consideration dollar-for-dollar and the cost, as well as quality.

George Wetzler, 12420 SW 11 Court, stated that the issue was control and questioned the protection being provided by AMR.

Mr. McCloskey stated that the Council had chosen not to enforce the terms of the contract [with AMR] and questioned the control. He raised complaints with the Town regarding dangerous actions by AMR vehicles and the only response received was from AMR thanking him for his concern and that the situation would be investigated. He stated that he had witnessed unsafe operations on three occasions and questioned why the Town was not investigating the complaints lodged by the public.

Tim Swig, 15221 East Waterford, stated that he was willing to pay the extra money to outfit the Fire Department with whatever was needed to provide EMS services.

Dave Downey, 10496 SW 17 Drive, stated that costs versus quality was discussed along with experience. He felt that the Town's firefighters were experienced and were dedicated to the Town more so compared to a person hired by the AMR from other areas of the country. Mr. Downey stated that a fire rescue service would provide an integral system and "would sell the city better" with annexations. He discussed his concerns of a two person rescue unit.

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

MAY 5, 1998

Dan Frost, 4100 SW 54 Avenue, stated that in June, he would have worked for the Town for 12 years and he held the value of his family high. He indicated that he did not appreciate the comments made by Messrs. Pisula and Davenport.

Jim Bunce, President of the Davie Professional Firefighters, stated that at the April Council meeting, Council had discussed phasing in Stations 68 and 65 and then later, taking over Stations 38 and 91. He asked if this would be prior to October 1999. Chief Donati stated that Station 68 would be taken over by October with Station 65 being phased in. He indicated that while AMR's contract was "winding down", the Town was preparing a timeline for the Town's personnel to be "on-line" to take over two stations. Mr. Bunce stated that a commitment was needed to be made before completing the whole phase in and that a timeline was needed because of subsidy reductions. He discussed Mr. Davenport's statements regarding the firefighter's experience and indicated that unless the two units were purchased and two individuals were hired, the firefighters would not be able to obtain any more experience. Mr. Bunce discussed the transport revenue which could be doubled. Discussion followed on the firefighter's experience and that of AMR's paramedics and AMR's revenues.

Mayor Venis stated that it had been mentioned that some cities operated with two paramedics on a unit. Deputy Chief DePaola indicated that two paramedics per unit seemed to be working but there were times when a third paramedic would be needed. He stated that Council would need to make the decision to allocate funds for three paramedics on a unit. Discussion followed on staffing level and additional units.

Bob Eberhart, representing AMR, stated that a meeting had been held with Chief Donati and Mr. Flatley and it was his firm's intent to assist the Town in whatever direction Council wanted to take. He added that AMR hoped to work in partnership with the Town's Fire Department whether it be phasing in or with training. Mr. Eberhart stated that regarding the collection percentage, AMR's books continued to be opened and a full audit could be done. He indicated that the collection percentage could be adjusted based on the criteria selected, for example, accepting assignment versus billing privately. Mr. Eberhart advised that the fourth unit was provided and may not always be noticed as it may be in service. He stated that AMR wanted to work with the Town and did not want to be adversarial.

Councilmember Paul questioned the figures once the annexation monies and EMS fees were included with an explanation being provided by Budget and Finance Director Christopher Wallace and Deputy Chief DePaola.

Vice-Mayor Cox questioned the status of the annexations. Mr. Flatley responded that the annexations had been passed by the House and Senate and were currently in the Governor's Office. He stated that the normal timeframe was 20 days on the Governor's desk and added that the annexations would not take effect until October 1st. Vice-Mayor Cox questioned when the revenue from the annexations would be realized. Mr. Wallace replied that the Town normally received property taxes in November which would include the EMS/Fire Rescue assessment. He stated that the tax on utility billings would begin in December and the intergovernmental revenue from the State of Florida should be received in October. Mr. Wallace stated that a problem would occur if the State did not include the

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
MAY 5, 1998

annexations in the Town's population counts, however, the State was suppose to include these figures. There was a brief discussion on cost reduction measures which included a drop plan for the firefighters and reducing the number of personnel from three to two.

Councilmember Weiner advised that he had a copy of a certificate of public needs and necessity and indicated that the certificate was issued in 1996 for a three year period for the Town to provide EMS services. He stated that the certificate was issued by Broward County and was subject to County ordinance. Councilmember Weiner indicated that he had requested AMR's certificate and was told that the certificate was the Town's. He advised that the County ordinance did not allow the holder to transfer or assign the certificate to someone else. Councilmember Weiner asked Mr. Webber to review the County's ordinance and provide an opinion.

Mr. Flatley stated that at the May 6th Council agenda, Mr. Wallace would be announcing whether the Town had the money for two new employees and to purchase the two units. Mr. Wallace advised that as the money had not been appropriated, Council would need to appropriate the money from the Town's reserves. He stated that the question would be if a fourth station was to be opened, how would the system be configured and financed on October 1st.

Councilmember Weiner stated that numbers had been shown for phasing in Stations 65 and 68 and indicated that he would like to see the numbers on Stations 38 and 65. Later in the meeting, Mr. Wallace indicated that the EMS fee would be a \$45 with a millage rate of 5.19.

Mayor Venis recommended that renegotiations from three to two paramedics be discussed at the May 6th Council meeting. Mr. Flatley added that a number of issues needed to be discussed including reviewing AMR's books. He stated that the contract was open for revision each August. Mr. Webber indicated that either party had the right to return to the table if there was a deviation of 15%± in the estimates of transports; however, the parties could renegotiate any portion of the contract at any time.

There being no objections or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

APPROVED _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk